



DROUGHT AND YOUR WELL

We all need water every day. If your household relies on a private well, drought may be affecting the water. A dry or low-producing well can feel like a crisis, and it may take time to work through a solution. Understanding your options can help you decide in advance what you'll do if your well temporarily or permanently goes dry.

THE BASICS

Several factors can affect the quality or quantity of water a well produces; they include:

- Time. Age of well may affect performance. Have a licensed professional check your well. Check with your well driller about drilling a replacement well
- Maintenance needs. Like everything else we own, wells need to be cared for to continue working effectively. The resources listed below include guidance for routine maintenance and management of your well
- Drought. When an aquifer is not recharged with adequate water from rain, snow, and other sources, water levels in wells can drop
- Do not exceed the well's yield capacity (the amount of water in gallons per minute [GPM] that the well can produce over an extended period)

EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS

If your well does go dry or become unreliable during a drought, you may want to:

- Identify an immediate source of water
 - Culligan delivers 5-gallon prefilled bottles of water in the Methow Valley. Visit <https://www.culligan.com/locations/wa/okanogan> for more information
 - Trucked water can be brought from an outside source and stored in a cistern or holding tank. The towns of Twisp and Winthrop are able to sell water in limited bulk amounts that can be trucked by residents to areas outside the town limits. The Town of Twisp maintains a potable water system, but does not warrant that bulk water sales can be relied on as potable water supply. The Town of Winthrop asks water purchasers to sign an agreement that includes a water safety acknowledgment. Check with the Washington State Department of Health for facts concerning trucked water. *Our search has not discovered any water haulers able to deliver trucked potable water in Okanogan County*
 - Local laundromats are an option for laundry and bathing

- Diagnose the problem. The Washington State Department of Ecology can provide technical assistance to help you understand why your well is not producing and what you can do about it

RESOURCES

- To inquire about buying water during drought conditions
 - Twisp Town Hall: (509) 997-4081
 - Winthrop Town Hall: (509) 996-2320
- Technical assistance from the Washington State Department of Ecology
 - Heather Simmons, Section Manager, Water Resources Program, Central Region Office: (509) 379-4600, hsim461@ecy.wa.gov
 - John Kirk, Hydrogeologist: (509) 457-7146; tkir461@ecy.wa.gov
- Homeowner's Guide to Well Construction: <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/swr9690.pdf>
- Frequently Asked Questions About Replacement Wells Requiring a Water Right: <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/0411014.pdf>
- Private Wells: Information for Owners (Washington State Department of Ecology and Washington State Department of Health): <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/0611021.pdf>
- Guidance for Local Government: Physical and Potable Water Availability: <https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/Documents/Pubs/331-597.pdf>
- National Ground Water Association Well Owners Guide: <https://wellowner.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/2021-WellOwners-Guide.pdf>
- Water Systems Council wellcare® Info Sheets: <https://www.watersystemscouncil.org/water-well-help/wellcare-info-sheets/>

DISCLAIMER

This document is not intended to cover all situations that might arise in addressing dry or low-producing residential wells, but is intended to provide general information about wells and alternative water sources that is available at the time of writing.